

House
REPUBLICAN
Conference

FloorPrep

Legislative Digest

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

J.C. Watts, Jr.
Chairman
4th District, Oklahoma

*House Meets at 12:30 p.m. for Morning Hour
and 2:00 p.m. for Legislative Business
(No Votes Before 6:00 p.m.)*

Anticipated Floor Action:

H.Con.Res. 269—Commending the Library of Congress

H.R. 910—San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Initiative

**H.R. 2412—Designating the E. Ross Adair Federal Building and United
States Courthouse**

**H.R. 1279—Designating the Aaron F. Henry Federal Building and
United States Post Office**

H.Con.Res. 292—Congratulating Taiwan on Its Recent Elections

H.R. 3707—American Institute in Taiwan Facilities Enhancement Act

**H.R. 5—Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act
(Considering Senate Amendments)**

* * *

Bills Considered Under Suspension of the Rules

Floor Situation: The House will consider the following six bills under suspension of the rules as its first order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

H.Con.Res. 269 commends the Library of Congress and its staff for 200 years of outstanding service to Congress and the nation and encourages the American public to participate in activities celebrating its bicentennial. The Library of Congress was established on April 24, 1800, and over its 200 year history has grown to be the largest and most inclusive library in history. The Library's collection has reached an unparalleled 119 million items. In observance of its 200th anniversary, the Library has established the following bicentennial goals: to inspire creativity in the centuries ahead and to remind Americans that libraries are the cornerstones of democracy. More specific activities celebrating the Library's centennial

are planned nationwide including issuing a commemorative coin and stamp and enhancing public access to the collections of the Library through the Internet. The bill was introduced by Mr. Ehlers *et al.* and was not considered by a House committee.

H.R. 910 authorizes \$85 million for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund, an interest-bearing account that will be administered by the Secretary of the Army in coordination with other federal agencies. The state of California, local government agencies, and private entities may contribute to the Restoration Fund. Acting through the Corps of Engineers, the secretary may use proceeds from the fund to design and operate water quality projects to treat and reclaim contaminated groundwater in the San Gabriel basin. Of this amount, \$10 million may be used for measures to prevent contaminated water from spreading into the Central Basin Aquifer. In addition, the bill authorizes \$25 million for research into long-term solutions to groundwater contamination caused by perchlorate, an inorganic chemical used to manufacture solid rocket fuel and other explosives. The bill was introduced by Mr. Dreier *et al.* and was reported by the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee by voice vote on March 16, 2000.

H.R. 2412 designates the federal building and United States Courthouse located at 1300 South Harrison Street in Fort Wayne, Indiana, as the “E. Ross Adair Federal Building and United States Courthouse.” The late Mr. Adair served from 1951-1970 as the United States Representative for Indiana’s 4th district. He was a member of the Veteran Affairs Committee, the Committee on Committees, and was the ranking member on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. After leaving Congress in 1970, President Nixon appointed him U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, a post he held until his retirement in 1974. The bill was introduced by Mr. Souder and was reported by the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee by voice vote on March 16, 2000.

H.R. 1279 designates the federal building and United States Courthouse located at 223 Sharkey Street in Clarksdale, Mississippi, as the “Aaron E. Henry Federal Building and United States Courthouse.” The late Mr. Henry served from 1960-1993 as the Mississippi state chapter president of the NAACP. From 1979-1999, he was the representative from District 26 in the Mississippi House of Representatives. Aaron Henry is survived by his daughter. The bill was introduced by Mr. Thompson (MS) and was reported by the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee by voice vote on March 16, 2000.

H.Con.Res. 292 expresses the sense of Congress that (1) the people of Taiwan should be congratulated for the successful conclusion of presidential elections on March 18, 2000, and for their continuing efforts to develop and sustain a free, democratic society that respects human rights and embraces free markets; (2) President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan should be congratulated for his significant contributions to freedom and democracy on Taiwan; (3) President-Elect Chen Shui-bian and Vice President-Elect Annette Hsiu-lien Lu of Taiwan should be congratulated for their victory; (4) the People’s Republic of China should abandon its provocative threats against Taiwan and take steps toward a substantive dialogue, including renouncing the use of force against Taiwan and making progress toward democracy, the rule of law, and protecting human and religious rights in China; and (5) the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (*P.L. 96-8*) are the legal standard that governs U.S. policy toward Taiwan. The bill was introduced by Mr. Armey and was reported by the International Relations Committee by voice vote on March 23, 2000.

H.R. 3707 authorizes \$75 million to acquire land and construct a new facility for the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) in Taipei, Taiwan. Under the bill, the funds may only be used if the new facility meets all security requirements that apply to U.S. diplomatic facilities. The AIT was established under the 1979 Taiwan Security Enhancement Act as a nonprofit corporation to carry out diplomatic relations and government-to-government programs with Taiwan on behalf of the U.S. The current AIT facilities and buildings

in Taipei were not designed for the corporation and fail to provide adequate security under U.S. requirements for overseas diplomatic facilities. The bill was introduced by Messrs. Bereuter and Lantos and was reported by the International Relations Committee by voice vote on March 23, 2000.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXIX, #8, March 24, 2000.

* * *

H.R. 5—Senior Citizens’ Freedom to Work Act (Considering Senate Amendments)

Floor Situation: The House will consider the Senate amendment to H.R. 5 after it finishes considering the scheduled suspensions. Mr. Archer is expected to make a unanimous consent request that provides one hour of general debate, equally divided by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Ways & Means Committee.

Summary: H.R. 5 repeals the Social Security “earnings limit” that affects approximately 800,000 Social Security recipients between the full retirement age (currently age 65) and age 70. This current law policy reduces, and in some cases eliminates, seniors’ Social Security benefits if they work and earn more than annual income limits (which amount to \$17,000 in 2000). The measure also makes several technical amendments to current law. The bill affects income earned after December 31, 1999 (*i.e.*, beginning this year, seniors age 65 and older may work and earn unlimited income without losing any Social Security benefits). President Clinton supports repealing the earnings limit and has stated that he will sign the measure. The Senate amendment to H.R. 5 clarifies that seniors who reach the retirement age in years *after* 2000 are covered by the current law earnings limit for months prior to their birthday in that calendar year.

The House passed the bill by a vote of 422-0 on March 1, 2000. The Senate passed its version by a vote of 100-0 on March 22, 2000. CBO estimates that enactment will cost \$3.9 billion in FY 2000, \$19.8 billion over FYs 2000-2005, and \$22.8 billion over FYs 2000-2010. The Ways & Means Committee reported the bill by voice vote on February 29, 2000.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXIX, #8, March 24, 2000.

* * *

To subscribe to this publication via e-mail, please send an e-mail to LegDigest@mail.house.gov and type “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line.

Eric Hultman: *Managing Editor*

Brendan Shields & Michelle Yahng:
Legislative Analysts

House
REPUBLICAN
Conference

**Legislative
Digest**

<http://hillsource.house.gov/LegislativeDigest>